



Fritz Daily
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Butte, MT 59701

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Possible Guest Editorial

Prior to the Atlantic Richfield Company, now British Petroleum Company closing the Butte Mines, the Anaconda Smelter, the Berkeley Pit, shutting off the underground mine pumps, and eventually closing the East Continental Pit in 1983 thus ending mining as was known in Butte Montana for over 100 years, Butte Montana was a thriving economically solid community of 65,000 to 70,000 residents. Today we are a community of 34,000 residents struggling to survive and grow.

The proposed decision on Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit by the Butte Silver Bow Local Government, the EPA, the State of Montana and ARCO is a bad decision! Not restoring Butte's portion of Silver Bow Creek to a quality creek where children can fish and play is unconscionable and an irresponsible decision!

The decision is the final decision for the Butte Superfund area and it along with the Berkeley Pit and Montana Pole decisions will have forever-negative environmental, economic and social consequences for Butte Montana!

Silver Bow Creek from Texas Ave to Montana Street is a Creek and a watercourse and not a sewer, a storm drain or a "water feature" as claimed by the EPA, State, Butte Silver Bow, and the Atlantic Richfield British Petroleum Company! Judge Brad Newman confirmed this in his decision in the successful Silver Bow Creek Headwaters Coalition Lawsuit against the State of Montana!

The current proposed Record of Decision Amendment does not include that creek. It excludes the area around the Civic Center as part of the current Creek and corridor cleanup and restoration. It seeks a waiver of water discharge standards to allow contaminated storm water and Berkeley Pit water to flow down the Creek. It creates giant retention/mosquito ponds for storm water storage. I believe this is wrong!

Arco/BP and the agencies stating you cannot have a real Silver Bow Creek connected to the groundwater, as required in a creek, is simply not telling the truth! The problem Butte faces is that the cleanup of the Creek started in Missoula and not at the Headwaters at Texas Avenue. Thus we do not know the results of the tailings removal that is essential to a restored creek.

Missoula now has a beautiful park at the Mill town Dam area while we in Butte are begging for a responsible cleanup!

The “stakeholders” in this critical decision are not the EPA/State representatives and the contractors as claimed by the EPA at a recent meeting. The true stakeholders are the folks from Butte and the Clark Fork and Columbia River Basins and most importantly the future of our great town---our kids and grandkids!

As we move forward to the final decision on what is known as the Consent Decree on Butte Priority soils that includes Silver Bow Creek from Texas Avenue to where it flows under Interstate 90, let everyone continue to work toward a responsible decision that assures Butte will receive the quality cleanup and restoration we are entitled to under Superfund and State Laws and the Montana Constitution.

In the final analysis if we do not have a quality clean and restored Silver Bow Creek and its corridor from Texas Avenue to Montana Street flowing through Butte where children can play and fish and the adults of the community can enjoy the amenities of a responsible cleanup and restoration as well then we have all failed.

Article XI Section 3 of the Montana Constitution States---”All waters within the boundaries of the State are the property of the State, held in trust, for the use of its people”.

I am not the enemy as some believe. I just care and want to make Butte a better and more environmentally safe place to live!